SOCRATES

Module G — Full Practice Exam · 105 minutes · 100 points

WRITTEN RECEPTION (60 points)

(ACCESS TO INFORMATION FROM WRITTEN TEXTS)

Read the text and then answer questions 1–8. In the multiple-choice questions, circle the number of the correct answer. In the other questions, follow the instructions.

THE SPREAD OF REMOTE WORKING

I Not long ago, the idea of doing your job from the kitchen table would have struck most managers as impractical, even unprofessional. Yet within the space of a few years, working from home has moved from a rare privilege to an everyday reality for millions of employees around the world. Fast internet connections, video meetings and cloud software have made it possible to carry out from a spare bedroom tasks that once required a busy office. As remote working continues to spread, however, employers and workers alike are discovering that this quiet revolution brings complications as well as freedoms.

II For many employees, the appeal is obvious. Without a daily commute, workers reclaim hours that were once lost to crowded trains and congested roads, time they can spend with family or on rest. The freedom to organise the working day around personal needs, whether collecting children from school or exercising at lunchtime, has improved the wellbeing of countless people. Studies also suggest that, freed from the constant interruptions of a busy office, many employees actually concentrate better and complete their tasks more efficiently at home. For those who once struggled to balance work and private life, the change has been genuinely liberating.

III Yet the picture is far from uniformly positive. Working alone at home, some employees begin to feel isolated, missing the casual conversations and sense of belonging that an office naturally provides. Without clear boundaries, the working day can stretch endlessly into the evening, so that the very flexibility meant to reduce stress ends up increasing it. Younger workers, in particular, may lose the informal mentoring that happens when experienced colleagues sit nearby. What looks like freedom from one angle can, from another, feel like loneliness and a blurring of the line between work and home.

IV Employers, too, face a difficult balance. On one hand, allowing staff to work remotely lets companies recruit talented people regardless of where they live and reduces the expense of maintaining large offices. On the other, managers worry about how to build a shared culture, supervise performance fairly and keep sensitive information secure when their teams are scattered across dozens of homes. Some organisations have responded by adopting a hybrid model, asking employees to come into the office for part of the week while working remotely for the rest, hoping to capture the benefits of both worlds.

V What the long-term consequences of this shift will be, nobody can yet say with confidence. Much will depend on the type of work involved, the culture of each company and the preferences of a new generation entering employment. What seems certain is that the office as previous generations knew it, a place everyone travelled to five days a week, is unlikely to return unchanged. Whether remote working ultimately makes us happier and more productive, or simply lonelier and more distracted, will depend less on the technology itself than on how thoughtfully we choose to use it.

QUESTIONS — PART I (60 points)

1. According to paragraph I, what has made working from home possible?

i. Longer office hours and stricter rules.

ii. Fast internet connections, video meetings and cloud software.

iii. A serious shortage of office buildings.

iv. The complete end of all business travel.

(6 points)

2. How does avoiding a daily commute benefit workers, according to paragraph II?

ANSWER:

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(7 points)

3. What do studies suggest about working at home, according to paragraph II?

i. Employees are constantly interrupted and work very slowly.

ii. Employees usually stop working altogether.

iii. Employees often concentrate better and complete tasks more efficiently.

iv. Employees strongly prefer noisy offices.

(7 points)

4. Why may younger workers in particular lose out when working remotely? (paragraph III)

ANSWER:

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(7 points)

5. Working alone at home can affect employees emotionally. COMPLETE: Some employees who work alone at home begin to feel

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(7 points)

6. According to paragraph IV, remote work helps companies with recruitment. COMPLETE: It lets companies recruit talented people regardless of

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(7 points)

7. What is the hybrid model that some organisations have adopted? (paragraph IV)

ANSWER:

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(7 points)

8. Mark the TWO statements that are true according to the text.

- ☐ Everyone agrees that remote working makes people happier.
- ☐ The traditional five-day office is unlikely to return exactly as before.
- ☐ Working from home brings no disadvantages whatsoever.
- ☐ How helpful remote working is depends largely on how thoughtfully it is used.
- ☐ Employers never worry about supervising staff who work remotely.
- ☐ Remote working spread slowly over several decades.

(2×6=12 points)

PART II — WRITTEN PRODUCTION (40 points)

9. *(40 points)*

Some people believe that employees should be allowed to work from home, while others think everyone should return to the office. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of working from home. Write 120–140 words in English.

DRAFT / טיוטה

FINAL VERSION / גרסה סופית (words 140–120)

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